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Final Project- SNHU Travel/Sprint Review and Retrospective

The success of the SNHU Travel project was a collaborative effort, with each role on our Scrum-agile team playing a crucial part. Having the opportunity to experience each role gave me the perspective of how the wheel of a scrum team should run. Personally, I’m a strong believer in experiencing every role from the bottom to the top of a company to really understand the vision and the product.

Being the Scrum Master was my first role and it was my sole responsibility to make sure the communication lines were open within each team having daily scrums. These meetings would be at most 15 minutes long, giving the team a chance to share their progress and potential challenges for the day. Then I made sure that we would have sprint planning. This occurred once a week, and this time was used to review the product backlog with the team and product owner. In the backlog refinement section of meetings, this gave the teams opportunities to review the items in the backlog. Knowing that if the backlog is maintained properly and is consistently updated, the team could see what task took top priority. Within that meeting, incorporating a sprint review is something that frequently happened. Teams conducted their completed work up to that point. It also allowed teams to explain what went well, what potential issues there were, and what could have been improved.

My next role was being the Product Owner and it was my responsibility to connect the bridge between the development team and stakeholders, ensuring that the team worked effectively to deliver a solid SNHU Travel product. Bearing that in mind, this is why having user stories was critical to our success. User stories essentially served as a mechanism that broke down the requirements into something that was much more manageable. It also provided a format that was structured and tailored to help the team understand exactly what needed to be included in the final product.

My next stop in this project was getting the opportunity to be the tester. It was a unique role to work with because essentially, it wasn’t necessarily a ROLE. It was something that everyone worked alongside together. Having user stories helped us as testers create a high-quality product that came from crafting test cases. The test cases were established to ensure there were pass/fail criteria, which only provided us with a solid product in the end. However, one of the things that was missing from the user stories was just a tad bit more details on the changes they wanted to see. An example of that could be where they wanted the pricing filter to be placed. Like they always say, the devil is in the details. It was risky to assume that the client and the testers had similar tastes in design, so it would have been helpful to have a better understanding of their aesthetic. We were able to work through that kink and figure out something that we thought the client would like in a product and we were right, fortunately.

The last role I took on in this project was being the Developer and I considered the role to be the brains of the operation. In that role, I needed to develop the requirements that the product needed to have and to produce the deliverables. The key to my success in that role was making sure that I understood the vision of the Product Owner and communicated this vision with the team. At the very beginning of the project, I set the expectations and standards because it was prudent everyone was on the same page moving forward as a team. Conducting a routine and following up on tasks that weren’t meeting deadlines was something I was also responsible for. The agile method as a developer worked effectively because it allowed me to make changes as needed and the results were instant.

One of the key points to our success was having effective communication on my end. I encouraged open communication through daily stand-ups, spring reviews, and quick discussions. Making sure that we had a well-maintained backlog ensured that everyone had access to updated information, and I encouraged the team to share their progress on a collaborative platform. One of the tools that we utilized as a team was Azure boards. This allowed the team to see each other’s work in real-time and we could adjust quickly.

The scrum-agile approach had some cons in the sense that it required time and training in the initial stages. However, the agile approach overall proved to be effective once it was implemented. An example of an agile approach success was completing user stories because it allowed us to deliver increments of functionality. The key to the team’s adaptability with an agile approach occurred when the project transitioned from a "Top 5 Destinations List” into a “Top 5 Wellness/Detox Vacations”. Within that change was a coding segment that needed minor adjustments to align with the product backlog requirement. If the team used the waterfall approach with this scenario, we would have had a significant delay in our timeline, not to mention we would have incurred costs due to the change. That said, the scrum-agile approach was a perfect fit for the SNHU Travel project.